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To Promote Your Community: Conduct a Tourist Hospitality School

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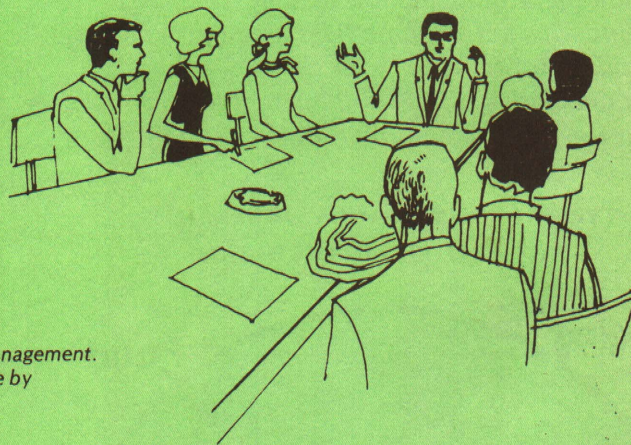
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To promote your community:

Conduct a Tourist Hospitality School

BY THOMAS A. BEATTIE¹

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This bulletin is a revision of Bulletin R 102 of the same title by
Robert W. McIntosh, retired.



- *Where's a good place to eat?*
- *What's there to see around here?*
- *How's the fishing?*
- *Where can we find a good place to stay?*
- *What's there for kids to do around here?*
- *Where can we camp?*

Every year questions like these are asked thousands of times in Michigan communities. Helpful responses will contribute to a pleasant vacation for tourists and provide significant financial benefits to communities willing to provide assistance.

The purpose of this bulletin is to guide communities in planning a tourist hospitality school.

Why have a hospitality school?

- *To report the impact of the tourist dollar*

Do the people in your community appreciate the impact of the tourist dollar? Often lodging, food service, or filling stations are seen as the

only recipients of the money tourists spend. Each dollar spent by a tourist in a community is spent again several times. This is known as the "multiplier effect." The wages of the waitress, housekeeper, or filling station attendant generated by sales to tourists will eventually reach the hardware store, the clothing store, and the grocery.

A school will help change local attitudes about the value of tourist expenditures in the community.

- *To tell the tourist of attractions in your area*

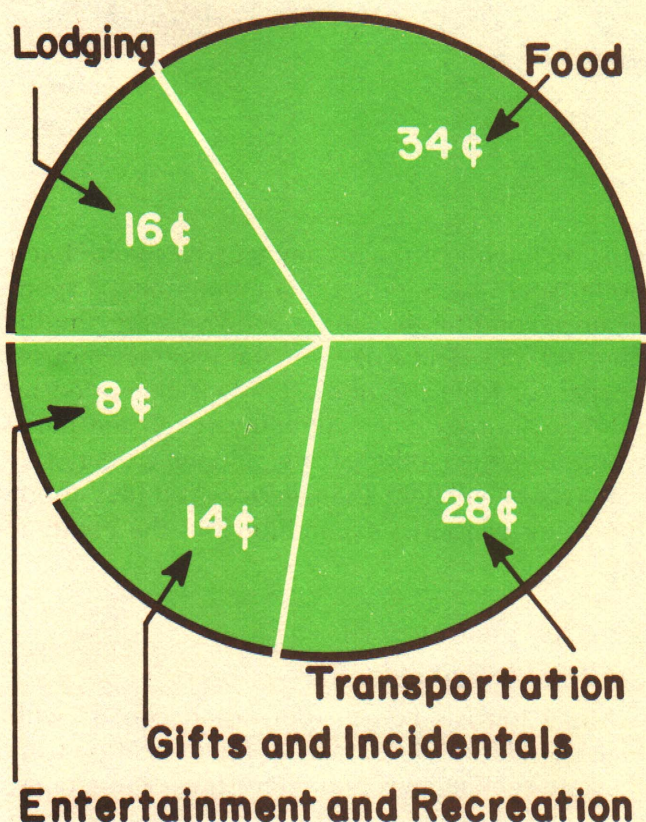
Many tourists come from urban centers with high population densities. On their vacation trips they are seeking new and interesting experiences, a change of scenery, and a friendly and relaxing atmosphere.

Often local people do not see their community and area as the tourist sees it. The features which bring the tourist—scenery, recreation, and other attractions—are often taken for granted by the local population. Young people employed in the hospitality industry often see themselves as "trapped" in an unexciting environment and convey to the traveller that they have just reached the end of the earth and the sooner they leave the better will be their vacation.

A school will help provide reliable information to those workers who come in direct contact with tourists about:

- Places to stay
- Places to eat
- Local attractions (museums, exhibits, festivals, etc.)
- Recreational opportunities (swimming, boating, fishing, hiking, skiing)
- Scenic trips in the immediate area (circle tours, foliage tours, etc.)
- In a nutshell, a school will instruct local people in the art of providing public hospitality and service.

TYPICAL TOURIST AND CONVENTION EXPENDITURES IN MICHIGAN



Travel and tourism are big business in Michigan. Sales for 1978 were estimated at \$4.7 billion dollars. It is estimated that each tourist spent \$30.35 per day for transportation, food, lodging, entertainment, gifts and incidentals. This graph shows how each tourist dollar is spent. Note that one half of each dollar goes for food and lodging, and the remainder is distributed throughout the business community. (Source: Michigan Travel Bureau. Tourism and travel expenditures include, conventions, and business-related travel.)

Planning the hospitality school

A formal program of instruction is recommended and should include three main topics:

1. Economic orientation to the importance of tourism to the community.
2. The art of courtesy, service and hospitality.
3. A thorough knowledge of local attractions, facilities, and services.

A first step is to form a planning committee. It should be a cross section of the community including business people as well as those not directly involved in business such as school representatives, youth groups, and community organizations. Choose people who are enthusiastic about their community and its potential for improving service and hospitality.

The planning committee should designate a chairperson who would have three major responsibilities:

- Organizing sub-committees
- Identifying local, regional, and state resources which could assist in planning and conducting the school.
- Coordinating the work of other committees.

Planning the course

DATE

Select a date that is close to the opening of your season—probably in April or May.

COURSE LENGTH

Six to eight hours of instruction will be required. The course can be divided into several two-hour sessions in the afternoon or evening, or longer sessions if your audience can spend more time together.

SUBJECTS

- These reflect the major goals of the school:
1. The importance of tourism to the community
 2. Description of local and regional tourist attractions
 3. The art of hospitality—the dignity of human services and the high regard local residents should hold for the opportunities to offer warm hospitality.
 4. Inspirational talk designed to motivate.

METHODS

The most effective teaching methods are visual aids, demonstrations and tours.

For the orientation portion, show charts, graphs, and figures along with the lectures.

You can effectively illustrate tourist attractions and regional points of interest with color slides and movies. Ask local photographers for good pictures. Obtain additional films from the resource organizations listed in the last portion of this bulletin.

A tour will be essential in order to "Know Your Community and County." Include all outstanding tourist attractions, restaurants, entertainment places, libraries, shopping facilities, industries, museums, and other places and facilities of interest to tourists. The tour requires careful planning. Be sure everyone understands each point of interest and those in charge know the full story of what is being described.

Participation by members of the group will improve your programs. People learn by sharing experiences and concerns.

Testimonials from previous guests who found the community interesting, the service excellent, or the local facilities attractive will impress students with the high-value tourist potential of your community.

FOR EFFECTIVE MEETINGS

1. Meet in a comfortable, well-lighted room large enough to avoid crowding. Enlarged pictures, maps, travel posters, and similar decorations create an atmosphere conducive to lively, stimulating discussion.
2. Plan each meeting carefully and provide plenty of time to cover each subject.
3. Change the pace of the meetings to hold interest. Mix in visual aids, demonstrations, skits, and tours. Strive to get participation, and use imagination and stimulation. Do not allow long speeches.
4. Publish the program in advance and send a copy to each person who will be participating.
5. Check mechanical props and equipment in advance to be sure they are working properly.
6. Have someone on hand to greet each person upon arrival in order to create a friendly and relaxed environment.
7. Start and stop the meetings on time. Adhere to your schedule for each session, including the breaks. Punctuality creates respect between audience and speakers.

8. Provide a summary at the end of each meeting. This helps to firm the lesson in the student's mind for longer retention.
9. Designate someone to take notes of the most important elements of the presentations. These will be useful in future meetings.
10. If possible, provide handout material such as maps, display cards or folders. A hospitality reminder card to be mounted in a conspicuous place should be helpful to the student when on the job.

ATTENDANCE

Urge participation by owners and employees of every business, particularly stores, service stations, lodging accommodations, restaurants, shops, marinas and parks. Committee members should make personal contacts with owners and managers to urge their cooperation. Keep records of attendance.

Since the school will be conducted before the peak of the tourist season, make special efforts to contact those people who are not yet employed. Include high school students and other part-time workers, and make them the prime targets of your instructional program.

Two sessions may be necessary to keep the crowd within manageable size. Also, business people may wish to split their staffs, so all could attend.

PUBLIC INFORMATION

As this school is wholly a public relations effort, the committee should set a good example and do an outstanding job of informing the public. Full and sustained newspaper and radio coverage is necessary. Plan the information schedule carefully. Include a time schedule of news releases, nature of releases, media, and persons responsible.

Pictures taken at early planning meetings will provide a good material for your initial publicity program. Publicize the school program, speakers, films and benefits to be derived from attending the school.

Some good news stories about the tourist hospitality school can also be used to reach a large audience in your region and throughout the state.

Do not skimp on information. The more the better—keep your public informed!

FOLLOW-UP AND EVALUATION

If conducted properly, the school should have a most favorable acceptance by students, and the lessons should prove to be of everyday use in dealing with tourists.

Continue the school annually. New people are always being hired, and those who have attended previously could consider the school an opportunity to "brush up" on current or new tourist attractions and facilities.

A questionnaire is very useful in soliciting constructive criticism from those who attended.

Interviews with the managers of businesses who cooperated in the school are also recommended.

Next year's planning committee should carefully review all evaluation reports so that the most useful ideas can be incorporated into the new instruction program.

MORE INFORMATION

Travel Bureau, Michigan Dept. of Commerce, P.O. Box 30226, Lansing, MI 48909

Michigan Highway Department, State Highway Building, Lansing, MI 48933

West Michigan Tourist Assoc., 136 Fulton Street E., Grand Rapids, MI 49502

Upper Michigan Travel and Recreation Assoc., Box 400, Iron Mountain, MI 48901

East Michigan Tourist Assoc., 1 Wenonah Park, Bay City, MI 48706

Southeast Michigan Travel and Tourist Assoc., 27777 Franklin Road, Southfield, MI 48034

Michigan Lodging Assoc., 30161 Southfield Road, Southfield, MI 48076

Michigan Restaurant Assoc., 30161 Southfield Road, Southfield, MI 48076

American Automobile, Assoc., Auto Club Drive, Dearborn, MI 48126

Michigan State Department of Commerce, Office of Economic Expansion, 525 West Ottawa, Lansing, MI 48933

Michigan Department of Natural Resources, Stevens T. Mason Building, Lansing, MI 48933

Association of Private Campground Owners, Box 296, Montague, MI 49437

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